

## SIAM AND ITS PEOPLE.

THE KING, HIS CAPITAL, HIS SUBJECTS.  
HIS REALM AND HIS NEIGHBORS.THE STORY OF THE PRESENT DYNASTY—A WISE  
AND PROGRESSIVE KING—THE NEW PALACE  
—A FAMOUS SHRINE—THE ROYAL CITY  
OF BANGKOK—TRAITS OF THE  
PEOPLE OF SIAM—THE MEKONG  
VALLEY—CAMBODIA AND  
ITS KING—THE COURT  
OF ANAM.Somedeth Phra Paraminda Maha Chulalongkorn  
Patindir Debia Maha Mongkut Purisaratue Raja  
Ra Wongse Warut Mabronse Parabut Warak-  
hattiara Raja Nikara Tama Chaturanta Parama  
Maha Chak Rubar Tira Gasangkak Paramadham

THE KING OF SIAM.

Mika Maha Rajad Hiraja Para Mananth Patite  
Phra Chula Chomklau Chau Yu Hua.  
(That is not Volapuk; nor pi. It is the full  
name and title of the present King of Siam.)The Kingdom of Siam has in its long history  
had several changes of dynasty. But just as all  
the Roman Emperors were Caesars, and the old  
Egyptian monarchs Pharaohs, so all Siamese kings  
have borne the half-name half-title of Phra,  
which indeed is probably closely akin to Pharaoh.  
The present dynasty, according to the late Phra  
Chomklau Chau Yu Hua, or Somedeth Phra Maha  
Mongkut, father and predecessor of the present  
King, was founded by a family living formerly  
in the city of Hamsavatt, in Pegu. Members of  
this family became great Ministers of State, and  
one of them led the first Siamese Embassy to  
France, in the reign of Louis XIV. Another,  
about the middle of the last century, was made  
viceroy of the northern provinces of Siam, with  
a court at Pitsanulok, and in May, 1782, was  
proclaimed King of Siam, under the style of Phra  
Buddhyot Fa Chulatoke. He died in 1809, and  
was succeeded by his son, Phra Buddh Lord Loh

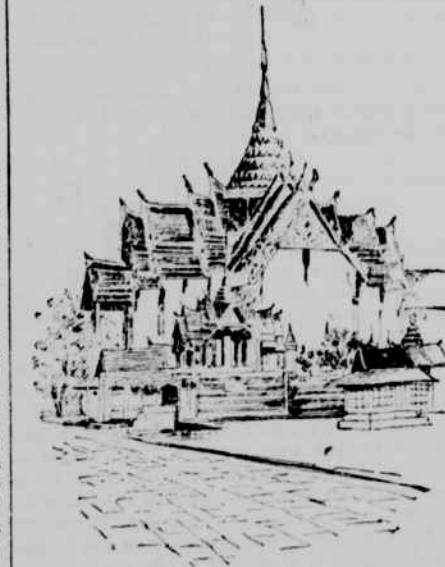
THE PALACE OF THE KING OF SIAM.

Nobhalay. The latter died in July, 1824, and  
was succeeded by his son, Phra Nangklai Chau  
Yu Aoca. "His reign," says our royal historian,  
in quaint "pudgin" English, "continued 26 years;  
his demise took place on 2nd April, 1851; then  
my succession to him concluded and I was crowned  
on May 15th of that year." In this case brother  
succeeded brother. Phra Maha Mongkut died in  
1873, and was succeeded by his son, the present  
King, who is commonly known as Chulalongkorn,  
and who formally signed his name Phra Bat  
Somedeth Phra Para Paraminda Maha Chulalong-  
korn Maha Mongkut Chau Yu Hua; but whose  
full name, style and title may be found in the  
portentous verbiage which adorns the beginning  
of this sketch.

## AN ESTIMABLE RULER.

This amiable and accomplished monarch, then,  
the fifth of his dynasty and great-grandson of its  
founder, was born on September 21, 1853. On  
the death of his father he was chosen by the  
Great Council, on October 1, 1868, to be King;  
and as he was then a minor the Chief of the  
Council was made Regent. At the age of  
twenty, however, Chulalongkorn attained his ma-  
jority, and on November 16, 1873, he was formally  
crowned, and the regency was abolished.His Majesty is a man of high natural abili-  
ties. In his boyhood he was an industrious  
scholar, and pursued a course of study that would  
be reckoned liberal and thorough in Europe or  
America. He mastered not only the chief Asiatic  
languages, but English and French as well, so  
that he now talks and writes them as readily as  
his native tongue, and is familiar with all the  
best classic and current literature of Europe and  
America. In his library at Bangkok may be  
found thousands of French, English and American  
books, and all the leading magazines and news-  
papers of those countries. Nor are they there  
merely for show. They all bear marks of use,  
and there, surrounded often by his friends or fa-  
miliar visitors, the King has been found to be  
in the several hours each day, keeping himself in  
touch with the times, and striving to bring his  
kingdom out of Oriental lethargy into the  
keen vitality of the Western World.Immediately after his coronation Chulalongkorn  
began a work of reform and progress which has  
now reached results of magnificent proportions.  
He began by adopting, save on special occasions,  
European dress. He abolished the forced labor  
system, by touching the forehead to the ground,  
and bade his visitors walk up to him and shake  
hands, like men. He proclaimed religious liberty  
throughout his realm, and decreed the protectionof Christians in their observance of the Sabbath.  
He reformed the executive and judicial branches  
of the government, lightened taxation, partially  
abolished slavery, opened new canals and roads,  
established an admirable postal service, built  
telegraphs, lighthouses and a railroad; surveyed  
and improved all navigable waters; founded a  
fine system of public schools, built hospitals,  
asylums, temples and art museums; introduced  
innumerable useful inventions, and set to his  
people personally an admirable example of virtu-  
ous, temperate, industrious, upright and exalted  
manhood.

## THE SIAMESE CAPITAL.

The royal capital was formerly Ayuthia. But  
that city was destroyed during a Burmese in-  
vasion, more than a hundred years ago, and since  
that time Bangkok has been the capital. The  
centennial anniversary of its elevation to that  
rank was celebrated in 1879 with a fine exhibition  
of arts and industries. At about the same time  
the King took possession of his new palace, which  
had been eight years in building and had cost  
nearly \$2,000,000. It is a really splendid  
structure, resembling in architecture many mod-  
ern European buildings, and presenting a striking  
contrast to the old-time palaces which still adorn  
the city. The audience chamber and throneroom  
is a vast apartment, with a floor of marble  
mosaic and a ceiling, fifty feet above, of exquisite  
jeweled glass. It contains three huge crystal  
chandeliers, which were originally intended for  
the palace of the Emperor of Austria. Along the  
walls stand many trees and shrubs, with leaves  
of solid gold and trunks and branches heavily  
plated with the same metal. These are the  
tributes paid to the King annually by the chiefs  
of various provinces, such as Laos and the Shan  
States. The King's throne is on a raised marble  
platform, and above it are the royal umbrellas  
which form a conspicuous part of the insignia.  
On elaborate occasions the King takes his place  
on this throne, clad in the ancient Siamese robes  
of office, his clothing almost solidly incrust-  
ed with jewels, and a crown of gold and jewels  
rising, like a minaret, some two feet above his  
head.Near the palace is the great temple in which  
the King worships, with its famous "shrine of the  
Emerald idol." Like the other numerous Buddhist  
temples, it is a building of majestic proportions,  
adorned with a richness and beauty beyond de-  
scription. The so-called "Emerald idol" is really  
an image of Buddha Gautama, eighteen inches  
high, made of one huge piece of pure green jasper.  
Its origin is lost in antiquity. Certainly it has  
been in existence for many centuries, and both  
in Laos and in Cambodia stories concerning it  
abound. All that is positively known is that four  
and a half centuries ago it was removed from  
Chiangrai to Zimne, then, afterward, successively  
to Lampang, to Kiang Chan, and, in 1779, to  
Bangkok. This image stands upon a golden  
throne thirty-four feet high and is gorgeously  
arrayed with ornaments of gold and precious  
stones.The old royal palace was inclosed within white  
walls a mile in circuit, and comprised not only  
the King's residence, but also temples, theatres,  
fortresses, etc., and was inhabited by some six  
or seven thousand persons, half of them soldiers.  
In the great audience hall there used to hang  
engraved portraits of various rulers, including the  
President of the United States. Another apart-  
ment was known as the Hall of Royal Pleasure,  
and was devoted to scientific instruments, machines,  
books, and objects of interest gathered from all  
parts of the world.The city of Bangkok itself is a strange ming-  
ling of beauty and ugliness, of civilization and  
barbarism. One observes this in the very ap-  
proach to it. The Menam is a broad, fine river,  
skirted with forests of such vivid green as may  
scarcely be found elsewhere, with fields gay with  
flowers, and with picturesque villages. Yet the  
stream is a sewer, reeking with loathsomeness,  
and one turns from its water, thick with efflu-  
via, sickened and disgusted. The city itself is thirty  
miles up, a railroad running thither from Pitsan-  
ulok, at the north. The Venice of the East, Bang-  
kok has been called, in reference to its numerous  
canals, its multitude of boats, and its so-called  
floating houses. Thatched with palm rattan, saysa recent visitor, and built on high piles driven  
into the soft river bed, these floating houses  
accommodate a very large part of the population,  
and before the use of carriages and carriage  
roads they contained a still greater part. They  
extend for several miles, not only on the banks  
of the main stream, but on the numerous klongs  
or canals which are cut for draining purposes into  
the country. Here are river shops, and from  
time to time, as one passes up stream, he comes  
to a talah, or river market. Everything is to be  
bought. Birmingham wares, lamps, plate, house-  
wifery, water-jars, tiger skins, carpenter's tools,

TOMB OF THE KINGS OF SIAM.

In short, whatever is to be purchased in the city  
bazaars is also to be bought in the floating shops.  
Nor are there wanting women peddlers, who, in  
their little canoes or sampans, paddle everywhere,  
crying fruit, cakes, betel and other refreshments,  
and doing, apparently, a good trade from morn-  
ing to night. This river life is a very curious  
study, and no one knows Bangkok who has not  
studied it. A strange medley! Here lie the boat-  
men of a prince asleep on a rickety landing-stage  
awaiting orders. Here are two nondescript play-  
ing chess violently on the platform of a floating  
house. Here comes a long sampan full of yellow-  
robed priests, respectfully ferried across the river  
to their temple. Here are four or five Chinamen  
bathing with the greatest decency and decorum,and here huge cargo-lighters laden with rice  
slowly force their way down to steamers at the  
wharves.Entering the city, one finds the same strange  
contrast. Here are quaint old pagodas, and by  
their side fine modern buildings with electric  
lights and passenger elevators. There are horse-  
carts in the streets, and the trolley system is now  
talked of. Here, too, are the stables of the white  
elephants, the Temple of the Sleeping Buddha,  
containing a colossal recumbent Buddha seventy-  
six feet in length; the great Royal Cremation  
Ground, where all Bangkok is assembled to witness  
ceremonies of a week's duration, with distribution  
of gifts, exhibitions of curious fireworks, and  
hazards to the populace at an enormous outlay  
from the princely purse, on the cremation of a mem-  
ber of the royal family, the splendors being in  
strict relation to the importance of the cremated  
personage. It is, all told, a city of strange and  
wonderful scenes, one of the most interesting  
that the observant and appreciative globe-trotter  
can visit.

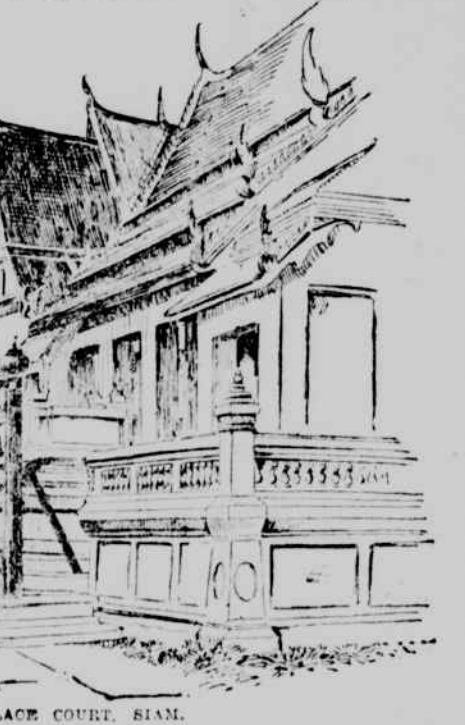
## THE PEOPLE OF SIAM.

But, after all, the people of Siam are the most  
interesting feature of the realm. They are gentle-  
mannered, indolent, pleasure-loving; yet quick-  
witted and capable of high intellectual achieve-  
ments. They avoid disputes, says a French mis-  
sionary, and whatever produces anger or im-  
patience. They are honest in their dealings, says  
another, and are so kind to their relations that

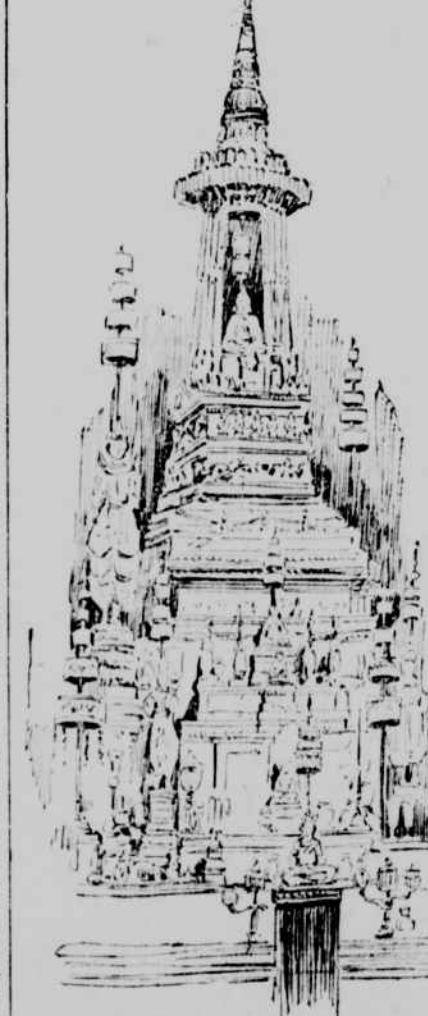
VIEW IN THE PALACE COURT, SIAM.

beggary and pauperism are scarcely known.  
Parents, says La Loubere, know how to make  
themselves extremely loved and respected, and  
Siamese children have great docility and sweet-  
ness. Palloix described them as "liberal abso-  
lutists, severe in enforcing decorum in the relations  
between the sexes, sharp and even witty in con-  
versation." These are attractive views of the  
Siamese character; in which nearly all observers  
coincide.The Siamese are almost as great tea-drinkers  
as the Chinese and Russians, and some of the  
finest tea in the world is produced in the Mekong  
valley. Opium was formerly used, having been  
introduced by the Chinese, but the present King  
and his predecessor have largely suppressed it  
by severe edicts. Area and the hotel net are  
almost universally used. Tobacco is also much  
chewed and smoked.The great events in the life of a Siamese  
are shaving the hair-tuft, reception as a house  
and marriage. A Siamese boy is named by his  
mother till he is two years old, and cared for  
by her, in the women's apartments, for two years  
more. During this time all his hair is allowed  
to grow. But at the age of about four years  
he is emancipated from female tutelage, and then  
all his hair is shaved off, save a single large  
tuft on the top of the head. This is allowed  
to grow as long as it will, and is kept curled  
on the top of the head, and held in place with  
jewelled pins. The hair of girls is treated in the  
same way. But at the age of eleven or twelve  
in the case of a girl, or thirteen or fourteen in  
the case of a boy, the tuft is trimmed down to  
the reasonable length at which it is there-  
after to be worn, and this hair-cutting is marked  
with elaborate ceremonies, to which relatives  
and friends are invited. In the case of a royal  
prince the occasion is made a gala-day throughout  
the whole kingdom.Every male Siamese is required to spend a  
year or two of his life in attendance on a temple  
shrine as a house, and his reception as such  
is marked with elaborate and impressive rites.  
Marriages are usually negotiated by a friend of  
the bridegroom, who makes the proposal to the  
parents of the bride. If they refuse a second  
time the suit is abandoned. But if they accept  
a celebration is held, and after an engagement  
of a month or two the marriage occurs. It is  
a civil contract, with no religious ceremony,  
though bonzes, or priests, are usually invited  
to the wedding-feast. A Siamese has only one  
real, legal wife, but may have in addition many  
concubines. A wife may obtain a divorce from  
her husband for unfaithfulness; her dowry is  
then restored to her, and she takes possession  
of her child, if she have only one; if there  
be more, she takes the first, third, fifth, etc., and  
leaves to her husband the second, fourth, etc.When a Siamese dies his family wail and lament;  
the body is washed and wrapped in a  
white cloth and placed in a coffin surrounded with  
flowers and tapers. A day or two later the  
coffin is borne out, not through the door, but  
through a hole specially made in the wall, and  
carried at a run three times around the house, in  
order that the spirit of the dead may not be  
able to find its way back into the house. Then  
the corpse is either given to birds of prey or  
burned—usually the latter.The Siamese are greatly devoted to music and  
in a way, to mathematics. They have many  
musical instruments, both wind and stringed, be-  
sides drums, cymbals, etc. The "khong-long" or  
"ranat" consists of a series of blocks of wood or  
of metal, suspended and struck by the player with  
hammers. The music thus produced is by no  
means unpleasant. The "pe" is a flute, made of  
wood, and is the leading instrument in an or-  
chestra. The "saw" is a violin, held and played  
after the manner of a violoncello. The "kapipe"  
is a sort of guitar, the strings of which are struck  
with the fingernails. The "t'ion" is a drum made  
of earthenware and snake-skin, with a series of  
holes for modifying the pitch of the tone. There  
are various other instruments of less importance,  
and these are all used both for orchestral music  
and for accompanying singing, in which the Si-  
amese are proficient.In mathematics the Siamese have a curious bent  
for odd numbers. Every house must have an odd  
number of rooms, of doors, of windows; every  
stairway an odd number of steps. The decimal  
system is, however, in universal use among them.  
They spend much time in investigating the powers  
and properties of numbers, and have a verita-  
ble passion for the construction of "magic  
squares," in which the rows of numbers, verti-  
cally, horizontally and diagonally, all add up to  
the same sum. Naturally, therefore, they are  
great chess players. Their chessboard is like ours,  
except that the squares are all the same color.  
The pieces on each side are a king, two ministers,  
two elephants, two knights, two clergies, two  
cannons and five pawns. The arrangement of the  
pieces and the moves made by them differ from  
our game, but the object, chessmate, is the same.

## UP THE GREAT RIVER.

The Mekong Valley, which France now lays  
claim, comprises about two-thirds of the entire  
Kingdom of Siam, and the Mekong River itself  
forms one of the greatest trade routes in the  
whole Indo-Chinese peninsula. Navigation of the  
stream is, however, seriously impeded at variouspoints by cataracts and by rapids where the river  
flows through narrow and deep gorges. Traffic  
has from time immemorial been conducted by  
boats and rafts on the clear stretches of the  
river, and by elephant caravans around the rapids  
and falls. The entire course of the river has  
not been thoroughly surveyed, but enough is  
known to assure us that, with some dredging  
and perhaps a few bits of railroad, it could be  
made a trade route of the greatest value, both  
to Siam and to the Southern provinces of China.  
Mr. Archer, of the British consular service, who  
recently traversed the region, reports that the  
opening of such a route would prevent few en-  
gineering difficulties.In travelling through the upper Mekong Val-  
ley, besides bullocks and carriers, a number of  
large Chinese caravans were met. The muleteers  
are generally Mahomedan Yunnanese, or Hsio, but  
some are Chinese from the borders of Szechuen  
and Kweichow. The local people distinguish  
them from the Mahomedans as "Ho Luang," or  
men of Greater China and pork-eaters. The  
leader of their long train of mules is much more  
ornamented than is to be seen westward, having  
its head gayly decked with silver trappings, foxes'  
tails, peacocks' feathers, and even gaudy labels  
of foreign goods. These caravans come from  
either the Northern States of Chinglung or from  
Yunnan, but one was composed of Chinese of a  
different type from the Yunnanese, and came  
from as far as Szechuen. Showing how littledirect intercourse there is between China proper  
and the north of Siam, these Chinamen were the  
first Mr. Archer had met anywhere in or close to  
Siamese territory other than immigrants by way  
of Bangkok. Most of the caravans met near the  
salt mines, and later toward Muang Sai, ply be-  
tween Yunnan, as well as other northern districts  
of Chinglung and the territory of Luang Prabang  
and Muang Nam. They bring down opium,  
which they sell or exchange for raw cotton.  
The trade consists almost entirely of these two  
articles, the opium being disposed of and the  
cotton collected on the way among the hill people.

## THE PEOPLE OF LAOS.

The villages, like those of all other hill people,  
are generally on the side of a hill, but they do not  
inhabit the ridges as some other tribes. Their  
houses are long sheds with straight walls built  
entirely of split bamboo. The interior is one long  
room on the level of the ground, with partitions  
for bedrooms; and a striking and most uncommon  
piece of furniture is low stools to sit on. The  
roof is also of split bamboo, and it is difficult to  
understand how they can keep dry at all in the  
heavy rains. They found these people, like all  
others, most hospitable and good-natured, showing  
neither fear nor the least despotism, though they  
had never seen white men before. The value of  
currency is not understood among these hill people,  
and as they will take no coin less than a rupee  
there is great difficulty in making purchases. A  
rice-pounding mill in one of these Lan Ten villages  
is most ingenious. The water is diverted from a  
stream through pipes into a trough cut into one  
end of a long ordinary rice-pounding pestle. When  
the trough fills the weight raises the pestle, which,  
when the water is discharged, falls back into the  
mortar and pounds the unhusked paddy in it.  
This contrivance is so simple and saves so much  
labor that it is surprising it should never have  
come into use in other districts in the north of  
Siam, where the paddy is usually worked with  
the foot. The Mos are also fairly common about  
here, and are distinguished by their white cloth-  
ing of thick cotton stuff. The women wear a kilt  
reaching to the knee, with the cotton garters  
common to nearly all the hill tribes, a pocket open-  
ing at the neck, and a head-dress like that of the  
Ko, but higher.The Government of Luang Prabang compares  
favorably with nearly any other part of Siam.  
The poll-tax on residents of 8 ruples a year for  
the head of a family and 4 ruples for unmarried  
children, does not appear heavy, and there are no  
farms or other taxes with the exception of the

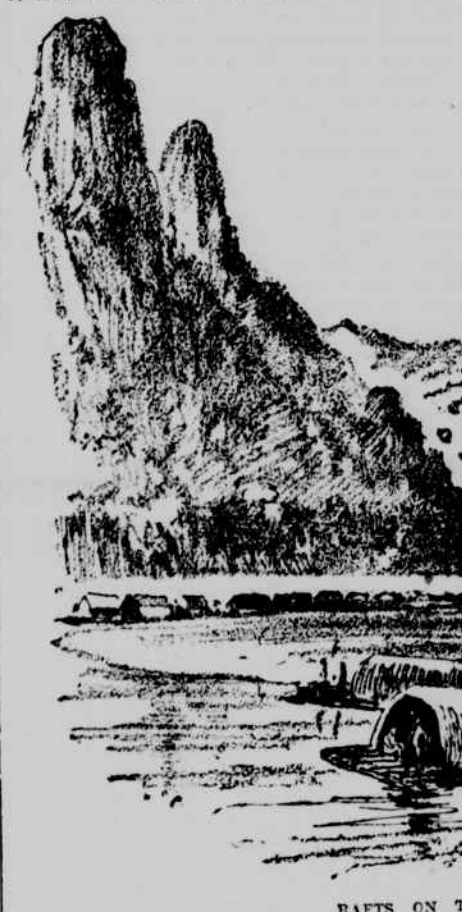
SHRINE OF THE EMERALD IDOL.

import and export duties, and no gambling, white  
wines are brewed on a Government scale; and there  
is no reason to doubt the statement generally  
made that corvée has been abolished. The people of  
Luang Prabang are in point of physique a far inferior race  
to the Laotians of Chinglung, or of Nan. The  
women, moreover, openly drink the native liquor,  
though not to an intoxicating extent. Withal,  
they are a remarkably light-hearted race, andLuang Prabang may well be described as the town  
of song and merriment. As soon as the sun sets  
music is heard everywhere, and the strains of the  
somewhat monotonous Laotian organ are heard  
usually throughout the night. A curious custom  
also obtains for the female respectable members  
of the community to promenade the streets in  
the evening singing in chorus.

## THE CAMBODIAN KING.

The little kingdom of Cambodia, at the mouth  
of the Mekong River, is a part of the Anamite

GREAT PYRAMID OF THE WAT PHNOM PAGODA.

Empire, and belongs to the French possessions in  
Indo-China. Its King, Norodom, presents a  
striking contrast to Chulalongkorn, being a typical  
Asiatic with no trace of European culture or ad-  
vancement. Although entirely subject to the  
rule of France, he keeps up a court in the old  
Cambodian style, and manages his personal affairs  
with all the barbarism of his fathers before him.  
According to M. Adolphe Belot, who was not  
long ago a guest at Norodom's court, under no  
pretence whatever is any one of his subjects per-  
mitted to touch him without a special order.  
This exaggerated deference is not infrequently  
attended with inconvenience to himself. On one  
occasion, his horses having taken fright and  
bolted and run foul of a post, His Majesty was  
thrown out of his carriage and lay wounded and  
bleeding on the ground. There were numerous  
mandarins and attendants on the spot, but none  
of them dared to offer him any assistance. For-

RAFTS ON THE MEKONG.

tunately a European happened to pass at the  
time, and taking pity on this forlorn King whom  
a stiff etiquette had condemned to die unmattressed,  
he took him up in his arms and carried him into  
the Palace. He being nursed in illness is en-  
tirely a matter for the hands of the Bonzes, or  
body-servants, whose fingers have to be bound  
in strips of cloth of gold. His hairdresser, pre-  
vious to operating on the Royal head, has to  
put on gloves, over which are worn heavy rings  
set with precious stones. Working under these  
conditions is no easy matter, and King Norodom's  
hair is probably the worst cut in the world. His  
Majesty has adopted a style of dress in vogue in  
Europe seventy years ago. He wears a blue tail-  
coat, with gold buttons, satin knee breeches, and  
pumps.King Norodom's harem is noted for its beautiful  
women—all Asiatics from different regions. Late-  
ly he had no less than 500 wives, and he considered  
that a moderate number. On one occasion, being  
remonstrated with on the subject by a missionary,  
he pointed out to him that he could be satis-  
fied with fewer wives—for instance, 100 as being  
a unit of a century—he replied that he would just  
as soon be a bachelor. This legend of spouses  
is watched over, not by eunuchs, as is generally  
the case in the East, but by horribly deformed  
specimens of humanity. The law in Cambodia  
is that whenever a child is born deformed, infirm  
or crippled, his parents shall land him over to the  
king, who rears him and raises him to the  
dignity of a guardian of his harem. Being a  
practical monarch, he insists on his wives making  
good use of their time. Some attend to house-  
hold duties, others have the care of the royal  
wardrobe and others devote their energies and  
talents to acting and dancing in plays invented  
by the King himself, on the models of the ancient  
poets, for he is an artist in his way.  
Norodom has sixty children, and is reported an  
affectionate father. As a husband, having the re-  
sponsibility of so many wives, he has, it appears,  
found it necessary to adhere to an old Asiatic cus-  
tom which prescribes moderate physical punish-  
ment of the fair sex in the belief that it is not  
without good effect. Now and again a few slight  
strokes of a light rattan cane are administered,  
but punishment is generally inflicted after King Noro-  
dom has lost at play, for he is unfortunately  
addicted to gambling. He puts on a good face  
over his losses before his partners, and invariably  
pays up; but no sooner has he returned to his  
harem than his ill-humor breaks out, and then the  
bodies have an unhappy time. The beauty  
who happens to be at fault had best keep out of  
his reach. He understands French pretty well,  
but cannot speak it. The whole of his vocabu-  
lary consists of two words—bonjour, tres-bien.

## ANAM AND ITS COURT.

Of Anam itself less is known than of Siam or  
Cambodia. Its capital, Hue, has seldom been  
visited by Europeans; scarcely by one, until  
within the last ten years. In 1883 the Emperor  
Hiep Hoa gave audience to a Frenchman, and was  
promptly deposed and put to death by his Min-  
isters for suffering such an unbecoming humiliation.  
But since then the French have established their  
 sway, and the present Emperor receives European  
visitors and shakes hands with them. Still there  
is much of pomp, magnificence and mystery about  
the courtly shoulders of an ugly spouse. The  
court. No subject, on pain of death, is per-  
mitted to speak aloud the Emperor's name; and  
the Emperor is generally addressed after King Noro-  
dom at the Court of Anam is surpassed only by that  
at Peking, from which it was originally copied.  
The capital of Anam is about sixty miles from  
the seaport, and the road thither passes through  
mountain and forest scenery of surpassing gran-  
deur. The city consists of two parts—the royal  
citadel and the people's quarters, the latter being  
situated, and the former higher and forbidding  
rather than magnificent.  
A recent visitor describes graphically a scene  
in the Emperor's great audience chamber.In the centre of the hall, which is an  
immense double-roofed pavilion, open along  
its entire front, and also separated by  
wooden columns, lacquered red and adorned  
with golden dragons, the Emperor sits upon a  
carved chair of scarlet and gold, whence he  
stands upon a triple dais, and is overhung by a  
richly embroidered canopy. At his side servants  
wave huge feather fans. No subjects except the  
princes of the royal family and the Court at-  
endants are admitted to the hall, whose distant  
arcades are plunged in gloom. A stillness that  
can be felt prevails. Motionless are the 600  
figures without, and the Emperor on his throne  
within maintains an equally heroic immobility.  
Suddenly, at the sound of blarney music and a  
chant, the entire body of mandarins in unison  
raise their joined palms to the level of their  
heads, bring them down with a sweep to the knees,  
lower, kneel, and touch the ground with their  
foreheads. Seven times is this prostration, the  
lai of Anamite observance, repeated. Seven  
times in rhythmic cadence the thronged ranks rise  
up, and at a triple dais, and is overhung by a  
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